

Legislation Text

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Presenter/Contact

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SUBJECT:

Discuss and consider approval of a resolution supporting the submission of City of New Braunfels and Texas Department of Transportation projects to the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization for federal funding in Fiscal Years 2023-2026.

BACKGROUND / RATIONALE:

The Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) has issued an agency call for Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG), Transportation Alternatives (TA), and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) projects in support of the development of the FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program. STBG eligible projects include roadway capacity, operational, bicycle & pedestrian, and transit improvements and programs. TA eligible projects include bicycle, pedestrian, and transit improvements and programs. CMAQ projects are limited to transportation improvements in Bexar County based on their Marginal Nonattainment designation. Contingent upon the availability of federal funding, the estimated STBG amount available is \$165 million and the estimated TA amount available is \$22 million.

STBG and TA are reimbursable federal funding programs and provide 80% of construction costs. The implementing agency is responsible 20% local match of construction costs and 100% of project development costs including engineering, environmental, right-of-way, construction management, and project administration. Although the AAMPO Transportation Policy Board selects the projects associated with funds, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is the federally designated pass-through agency. The implementing agency is required to enter into agreements with TxDOT and pay TxDOT for project review and administration.

Projects submitted for funding consideration must have a minimum construction cost of \$1,000,000 and must be on functionally classified roads and in areas that are open to the public. Project submittals and commitment of local match are due to the AAMPO on April 1, 2021. Projects will be selected in August 2021 by AAMPO's Transportation Policy Board based on technical score, agency priorities, project readiness, and public input.

City staff are recommending four city projects for AAMPO's call for projects. The projects are recommended based on mobility and safety needs, high growth locations, and the city's transportation goals.

The recommended STBG projects, listed in priority, include:

- 1. Barbarosa Rd/Saur Ln Street Improvements from FM 1101 to Saengerhalle Rd.** The project includes improving the roadway from two lanes to four lanes with turn lanes and medians. The project also includes traffic control, sidewalk, and drainage improvements. The section from FM 1101 to Alves Lane is on the 2019 Bond Program to be funded for final design and construction if funds are available. The proposed project terminates at Saengerhalle Rd due to various constraints and the additional

planning work required to determine the appropriate alignment.

2. **Kohlenberg Rd Street Improvements from IH 35 to FM 1101.** The project includes improving the roadway from two lanes to four lanes with turn lanes and medians. The project also includes traffic control, sidewalk, and drainage improvements. Preliminary engineering was completed for the proposed project in preparation for the 2019 Bond Program; however, it was not selected for funding.

The recommended TA projects, listed in priority, include:

1. **Dry Comal Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail from Walnut Ave to Elizabeth Ave.** The project includes a 10’ shared use path along the Dry Comal Creek and Landa Park Drive. Preliminary engineering was completed for the proposed project from Walnut Ave to Landa St and is planned to be extended to Elizabeth Ave to connection improvements planned on Landa Park Drive and Elizabeth Ave.
2. **Common St Pedestrian Improvements from Liberty Ave to Loop 337.** The project includes 6’ sidewalks on both sides of Common St to connect Hinman Island, Prince Solms, and River Acres Parks, Comal County Fair Grounds, New Braunfels Public Library, cemeteries, and area neighborhoods. It will also connect to funded pedestrian improvements on Union Ave and on local streets adjacent to Lamar Elementary school. The project also includes enhanced pedestrian crossings.

City staff also coordinated with TxDOT on projects on the State Highway System being considered for the AAMPO call for projects. TxDOT identified three projects to submit for STBG funding and looking for city support for the project. The projects listed in priority below were included in IH 35 Operational Study in 2017 that developed and cleared highway, ramp, and interchange projects along the IH 35 corridor from FM 1103 to the Comal/Hays County Line.

1. **IH 35 & Loop 337/Rueckle Rd Operational Improvements.** The project includes new turnaround bridges and travel lane and signal improvements. The project ties into city improvements on Rueckle Rd.
2. **IH 35 & Solms Rd Operational Improvements.** The project includes new turn around bridges and travel lane and signal improvements. The project ties into city improvements on Solms Rd.
3. **IH 35 & Schmidt Ave Operational Improvements.** The project includes new roundabout intersections and travel lane and sidewalk improvements on Schmidt Ave.

City staff are preparing the applications for the proposed city projects including project scope, cost estimates, and documentation. The application also requires a resolution of support for the project and commitment of local match.

ADDRESSES A NEED/ISSUE IN A CITY PLAN OR COUNCIL PRIORITY:

ENVISION NEW BRAUNFELS	ACTION 2.12 [PROJECT]	Use trails, shuttles and complete streets to connect existing and new destinations/experiences.
	ACTION 3.19 [PLAN INITIATIVE]	Improve walkability across town to attract younger generations seeking pedestrian connections.
	ACTION 3.20 [POLICY]	Encourage residential developments to include pedestrian and bicycle friendly trails to nearby schools, preferably within a 2-mile radius of each school.

ACTION 7.1 [PROJECT]	Implement a sidewalk improvement program to install and replace sidewalks or walking trails where they do not exist or have gaps, particularly near and to/ from schools.
ACTION 7.19 [POLICY]	Improve connectivity for all modes of transportation including bicycles.
ACTION 7.21 [POLICY]	Ensure there is connected multi-modal access to all public facilities and from all parts of town.
ACTION 7.49 [PROJECT]	Widen IH-35 exits and intersecting roads for increased traffic flow.
ACTION 7.53 [PLAN INITIATIVE]	Upgrade existing arterials and major collectors and identify new alignments to create a network of expressway or parkway functional classification roadways. Create a plan by 2020; complete construction by 2040.
ACTION 7.55 [PARTNERSHIP]	Collaborate with regional partners (MPO, TxDOT, AACOG, other cities, etc.) on future corridors between New Braunfels and Seguin to relieve congestion on SH 46, FM 725, and FM 1044 including an extension of FM 306 towards the Airport, an extension of Business 35, an extension of Rueckle Road or Solms Road, and a connection to SH 130.
ACTION 7.59 [PLAN INITIATIVE]	Address future infrastructure needs when roadways are built by planning for infrastructure not necessarily needed at the present, but what will be needed in the future.
ACTION 8.15 [PARTNERSHIP]	Provide active multi-modal transportation networks that create “physical connections” particularly between or through historic/cultural destinations, Wurstfest grounds, and trails.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The STBG and TA programs are a reimbursable federal funding program and the city is responsible for the minimum 20% local match for the construction cost and 100% of project development costs for city projects.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of a resolution supporting the submission of City of New Braunfels and Texas Department of Transportation projects to the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization for federal funding in Fiscal Years 2023-2026.